

BANGLADESH

EMPOWERING THE WOMEN OF BELOBO: POWERED BY GRAM BIKASH SHOHAYAK SHANGSTHA

December, 2024 - February, 2025

In the remote village of Belobo in Bangladesh, Gram Bikash Shohayak Shangstha (GBSS) works to empower the most vulnerable members of society – the women and adolescent girls who are impacted by poverty, violence, discrimination and hostile socio-political situations.



With support from HomeNet South Asia, GBSS has organised these women and girls into groups to build capacity through knowledge and awareness. As a part of their recent efforts, GBSS celebrated International Women’s Day together with members of their group. The celebrations included a cultural program, as well as discussions around gender sensitivity, women’s rights and measures to empower and protect themselves.

The groups also celebrated other national days – like the International Mother Language Day on 21 February, 2025 and Independence Day on 16 December, 2024. On the occasion of Eid, GBSS distributed food, thus supporting the members’ basic needs and strengthening confidence.

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND YOUTH THROUGH SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN NARSHINGDI

Supported by Gram Bikash Shohayak Shangstha (GBSS), women leaders from marginalised communities in Narshingdi are taking the initiative to build capacity within their groups.

Nazma Akter is one such leader who is empowering members by offering skill-based training in sewing and other boutique requirements. Similarly, another leader, Rozina Begum, has taken the lead on offering handicraft training to community members.

Their initiatives are playing a crucial role in engaging the youth within the community, and fostering income generation skills that will pave the way for a brighter, self-sufficient future. Moreover, this is a testament to these women’s leadership abilities as they enable empowerment through creativity.



SHINING A LIGHT ON INVISIBLE WORKERS IN BANGLADESH: A STUDY BY BANGLADESH LABOUR FOUNDATION

26 February, 2025

Bangladesh Labour Foundation (BLF) recently launched their groundbreaking study on home-based ready-made garment workers (HBRMGWs).

Entitled “Assessment on the Socio-economic Condition of Home-Based Ready-Made Garment Workers (HBRMGWs) in the RMG Supply Chain”, this study analyses the socio-economic realities of these workers and goes on to identify critical policy gaps. It calls for supply chain transparency, social protections and the ratification of ILO C177 among other measures. The report also recommends a multi-stakeholder approach that aims to empower through the collaborative involvement of the government, employers, brands, civil society, and trade unions.

On 26 February, 2025, BLF conducted a National Dialogue event where it disseminated the study amongst government representatives, development partners, trade unions, representatives from brands, academic circles, civil society organisations, and home-based RMG workers.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS WITH UNNAYAN SANGHA (US)

8 March, 2025

Unnayan Sangha recently observed International Women's Day in Jamalpur, following the powerful theme – 'For ALL women and girls: Rights, Equality, Empowerment'.

The celebration brought together 300+ women for a vibrant rally, followed by an empowering meeting that offered a platform for home-based workers to make their voices heard. The meeting called for an end to violence against women, and highlighted the need for safe spaces and mobility to their workplaces. The event was crucial in bringing forth the issues faced by home-based workers, and creating space for community advocacy to empower local women.



UNNAYAN SANGHA SKILL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING FOR HOME-BASED WORKERS

December 2024 - February 2025

Over 40 home-based workers in Jamalpur were enabled through a 27-day skill development program, organised by Unnayan Sangha and supported by Hong Kong and Malaysia. They received valuable sewing and tailoring training, designed to help them make high quality dresses and handicrafts.

These skills will go on to help these workers step up the quality of the products they make – thus boosting demand and increasing their earning potential in future. The program doesn't stop here – there are plans in place to amplify its impact to involve over 140 workers in the coming months.



INDIA

NURTURING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: LMKS HEALTH CAMP

29 March, 2025

Our affiliate partner LMKS recently collaborated with a local doctor in Nashik, Maharashtra to organise a health camp for the home-based workers of the region who are operating within the informal economy.

The health camp offered general check-ups and medicines to 25 women workers who often deprioritise their own health due to family responsibilities and financial constraints. It provided timely medical interventions to women suffering from undiagnosed illnesses while underlining the importance of preventive healthcare.



OFFERING LEGAL EMPOWERMENT, AWARENESS AND SUPPORT

February, 2025

As a part of their efforts in Nashik, our affiliate partners at LMKS offer legal assistance and support to home-based workers who require it. This assistance was recently availed by Anita Patil, a member of the organisation who works as a home-based tiffin service provider and flour mill operator.

Following a marital dispute between her neighbours, Anita was served legal notices by one of the concerned parties for mediating the match in the first place. Anita approached LMKS for support and the leaders intervened on her behalf. Further consultation with an advocate (facilitated by LMKS) confirmed that Anita could not be held responsible – which led to the charges against her being dropped.

This kind of assistance builds confidence and legal awareness among the members, and makes them feel supported through trying times. Moreover, it enhances productivity through added peace of mind.



WEAVING PROGRESS IN ASSAM: SANEKI WEAVES

27-28 February, 2025

Facilitated by North East Network (NEN), the Saneki Weaves initiative held a 2-day design workshop for the weavers of Dhemaji, Darrang, Golaghat, Kamrup (Rural), Sonitpur, and Udalguri in Assam.

The workshop introduced participants to new innovations in design through colour and composition, and facilitated greater market readiness by promoting awareness around market trends. The program equipped attendees with the skills they'd need to sustain traditional crafts and preserve their cultural heritage with greater efficiency.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS IN NAGALAND, FOCUSED ON WELLBEING

8 March, 2025

Nenterprise and NEN Nagaland planned out a meaningful way to mark International Women's Day this year, under their theme of 'Health and Wellbeing'. Held in Middle Khomi Village, their event made knowledge and healthcare services accessible to 120 women weavers and 66 students in Phek district.

Attendees took away knowledge around nutrition, reproductive health, childcare and safety, and had the opportunity to learn about local herbal plants through interactive segments. The campaign also upheld the attendees rights to essential healthcare by distributing health cards and providing services like blood testing and blood pressure checks. Such events go a long way in engaging women and the youth, empowering them in their journey to wellbeing through a community-based approach.



PROMOTING LOCAL CRAFTS IN MEGHALAYA: WINTER SALES EVENTS SUPPORTED BY NEN

December, 2024

Two vibrant winter sales events organised by Shillong's Fabulous Family Store brought together diverse tailoring groups from Madanrting and East Khasi Hills, and farmer groups from Laitkseh and West Khasi Hills – all supported by the North East Network (NEN).

The events put up a dazzling display of handmade products – not only promoting local crafts but also enabling networking opportunities and valuable market exposure for the workers from these tailoring and farmer collectives. Aside from helping generate income, such events play a crucial role in strengthening livelihoods and community identities.



EMPOWERING BRIGHTER FUTURES IN RAJASTHAN THROUGH TRADITIONAL CRAFT SKILL TRAINING

2024 - 2025

Fuelled by purpose, our affiliate partner Sadhna in Rajasthan, is facilitating financial independence, confidence and growth for rural women in the state. Over the last year, Sadhna has trained 115 women in Kumbhalgarh, 100 in Delwara and 30 in Kailashpuri, upskilling them in traditional crafts.

The stories of Rekha and Prema, two members of Sadhna, are testament to the kind of progress these kinds of trainings can facilitate – boosting confidence, strengthening livelihoods and opening new doors.

- Rekha, a young woman from Raya Village lives with her husband and is currently expecting their first child. Despite having had no formal education, these trainings have empowered Rekha to contribute to her family income and create opportunities for her child in future.
- Prema from Sujio Ka lena Village is a wife and a mother whose primary responsibilities included duties within her household and their fields. After attending the training program in Kumbhalgarh, she has found a means to support her family's livelihood further – by taking up embroidery work she can do at home. Today, not only has Prema excelled in her craft, she is also amplifying change by training 20+ women in Gawar village.



15 DAYS. ONE VOICE: A MASSIVE VICTORY FOR BEEDI WORKERS OF MURSHIDABAD

December, 2024

Grassroot leaders (aagewans) from Lalgola, Murshidabad recently demonstrated the power of collective action and organisation in bringing about change!



SEWA's aagewans organised a 15-day non-violent strike, which created opportunities for

negotiation around the wages paid to beedi workers and engagement with formal grievance mechanisms. After persistent dialogue with contractors and formal complaints being submitted to the Block Office and IMW, the strike ended with the leaders successfully negotiating a wage increase for beedi workers from INR 140 to INR 170 per 1000 beedis.

SEWA'S NATIONAL TRADE COMMITTEE PUSHES FOR HOME-BASED WORKER RIGHTS

11-12 December, 2024

Home-based workers from nine Indian states came together at the National Trade Committee meeting at Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The participants included piece-rate workers from across Beedi, Textile & Garment, Food and Bangle sectors.



The meeting enabled the workers to understand their formal status as home-based workers, in alignment with the definition by the Government of India and the ILO Convention C177. In addition, the meeting encouraged national advocacy for minimum wages, occupational safety, and social security through active engagement with State and Central Labour Departments. The event functioned as a crucial platform for awareness, empowerment and future growth.

PAKISTAN

ADVOCACY THROUGH AWARENESS: SESSIONS BY AWAM PAKISTAN

December 2024 - March 2025

Home-based workers in Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan had a chance to develop deeper awareness around their rights and build capacity to improve their livelihoods – empowered by the Association of Women for Awareness and Motivation (AWAM).

AWAM's recent sessions put the spotlight on key issues faced by home-based workers – including their lack of legal recognition, the absence of social protections, and their exclusion from basic rights like being paid a minimum wage. The sessions highlighted how these factors continue to keep these workers marginalised – with special focus on how they are often exploited and paid unfair wages by contractors. Additionally, participants also learned how changing climate factors and poor work conditions at home pose serious health risks.

These awareness and capacity building workshops played an important role in strengthening the collective voice of the home-based workers in this region – empowering them to stand up and advocate for themselves, now and in the future.



SRI LANKA

FOSTERING THE SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE AND GROWTH: TRAINING EVENT BY INDECOS

1 December, 2024

The Institute for Development of Community Strengths (INDECOS), in collaboration with HomeNet South Asia, organised a 1-day training program for home-based women workers in Matara, Sri Lanka. The session brought together 30 women to be trained on skills around entrepreneurship development, customer service, financial literacy and ensuring product quality.

The group exercises, exposure visits, presentations and reading materials offered a deeper understanding of the topics, creating opportunities for practical exposure and learning through peer interactions. Attendees left with elevated skills, boosted confidence – and a stronger entrepreneurial mindset!



ENABLING HOME-BASED WORKERS IN TOURISM: A 3-DAY TRAINING PROGRAM BY INDECOS

19 - 21 March, 2025

Continuing their efforts in Matara, the Institute for Development of Community Strengths (INDECOS) conducted an extensive 3-day training program for home-based workers in the tourism industry.

The program created valuable skill development opportunities for 30 women workers operating in home-stays, restaurants and tourism services, as well as those who work to produce sweets, garments, and ornamental and coconut-based products. Not only did participants learn crucial skills to improve their products and services – they also gained broader market perspectives through exposure visits to model hotels.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2025, CELEBRATED IN MATARA CITY

11 March, 2025

300 women from Matara's rural communities united in a vibrant show of empowerment and positivity, on the occasion of International Women's Day. The streets came alive with their banners and messages as they marched from the city centre to the auditorium.

The festivities continued at the decorated auditorium, with dance performances, the sharing of success stories of women workers, and a presentation ceremony where 100+ women were appreciated with gifts. The event saw great engagement from the community and the government, with women police officers and government representatives playing an active role in the celebrations. This was a landmark event, marking an important milestone in the empowerment and leadership of the women of the community.



HOMENET SOUTH ASIA

MAKING AN IMPACT AT THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW69)

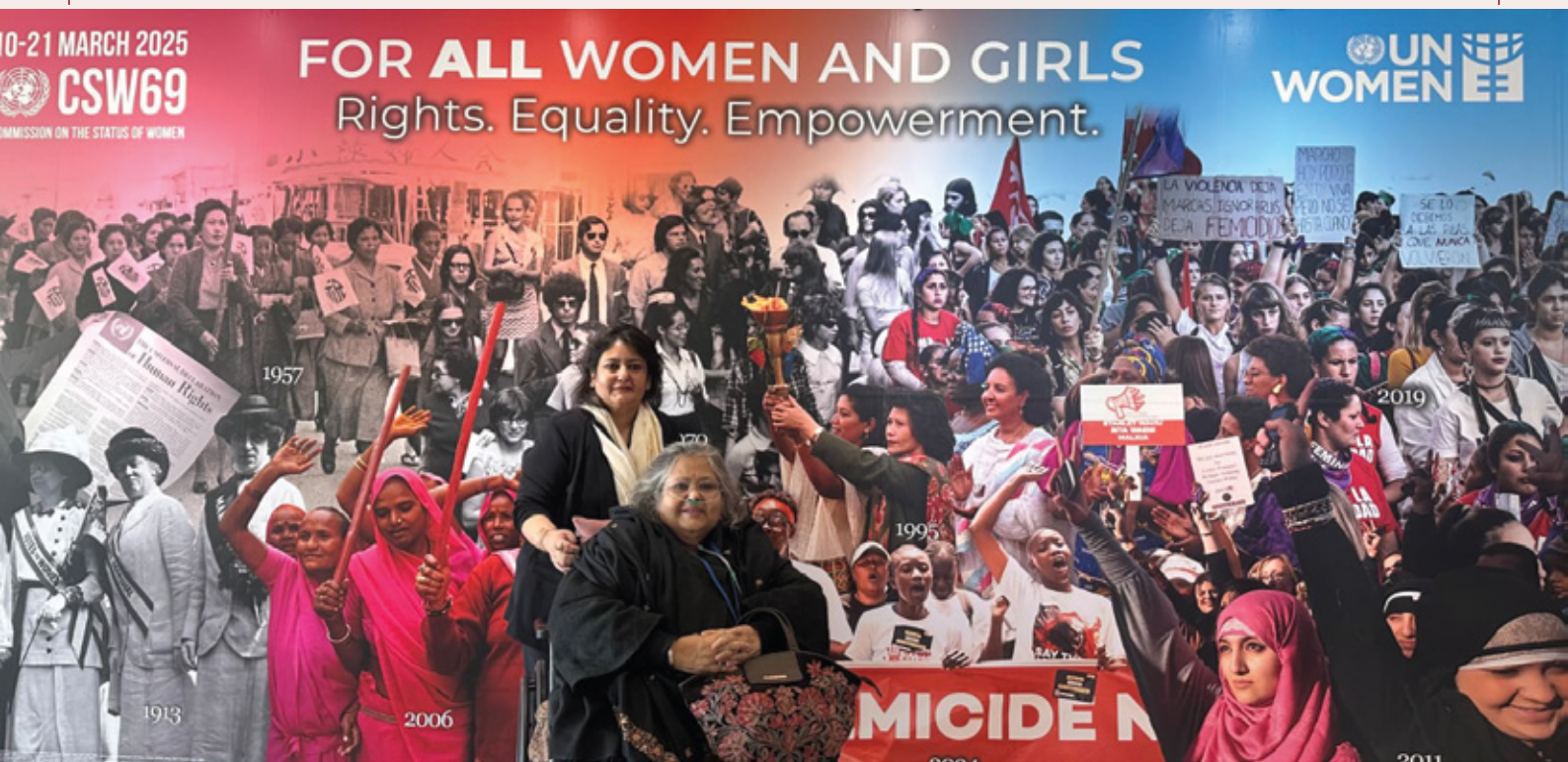
March 2025

Held in the US, the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women brought together global gender rights advocates, UN officials and South Asian women's networks for discussions around women's labour and economic justice. At the heart of these conversations, was the HomeNet South Asia delegate – led by our Enforcer Ms. Chandni Joshi and Regional Coordinator Ms. Sristi Joshi Malla.



We participated in sessions on the ratification of ILO C190 and insights on Beijing+30. The discussions shed light on gender inequalities, highlighted HomeNet South Asia's impact in this context, and reaffirmed the political will around the ILO C190 and Beijing+30 commitments. The event played an important role in strengthening our alliances with global bodies like WIEGO, UN Women, and ILO.

On a celebratory note, the event also saw our Enforcer Ms. Chandni Joshi being honoured with 5 awards and recognitions!



DIVERSE YET UNITED: THE HOMENET SOUTH ASIA TAPESTRY, RECREATED!

14 March, 2025

Ahead of HomeNet South Asia's 25th year celebration, we recreated our iconic tapestry 'Diverse Yet United'. A remarkable example of artistry, the tapestry represents the solidarity of home-based workers around the world.

The tapestry was made to be presented to the UN Secretary General. As per the UN protocols, our Enforcer Ms. Chandni Joshi and Regional Coordinator Ms. Sristi Joshi Malla officially handed it over at the CSW69 to H.E. Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa, Ambassador – the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations. He would in turn, present it to the UN Secretary General subsequently.



NETWORKING


At the Grant Inception meeting with Ford Foundation for the 'Social Bond Initiative: Economic Justice for Women in the Informal Sector'. Held in New Delhi on 16 and 17 January, 2025, the meeting was attended by its Social Bond Partners - HNSA, LSST, Sambhav Foundation and ICRW.







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